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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 000548

SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR IO/UNP AND EUR/WE

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [IT](#) [ITALIAN POLITICS](#)

SUBJECT: ITALIANS SHADOWBOXING OVER UNSC REFORM

REF: ROME 540

CLASSIFIED BY: POL M/C TOM COUNTRYMAN, REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

1. (C) FOR SOME AS-YET UNKNOWN REASON, THE BERLUSCONI GOVERNMENT IS ALARMED THAT UNSC REFORM EFFORTS MAY AGAIN BE GATHERING STEAM. OUTGOING MFA POLDIR GIANCARLO ARAGONA CHOSE TO OPEN A SESSION WITH VISITING U.S. G-8 POLDIR DAVIES ON PLANS FOR THE U.S. G-8 CHAIRMANSHIP (SEPTEL) WITH A LENGTHY RIFF ON THE PERILS OF REFORMING THE EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS FOR SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP. ARAGONA'S REMARKS FOCUSED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON THE POSSIBLE ADDITION OF NEW PERMANENT MEMBERS, SOMETHING ITALY COULD NOT ACCEPT.

2. (C) "MANY ASPIRANTS" TO PERMANENT MEMBERSHIP STATUS WERE SEEKING TO LEVERAGE CURRENT CONCERN IN NY OVER IMPROVING THE UN'S ABILITY TO ADDRESS NEW SECURITY CHALLENGES INTO BETTER POSITIONING FOR UNSC MEMBERSHIP, ARAGONA ASSERTED. ADDING NEW PERMANENT MEMBERS WOULD BE A "TERRIFIC BLUNDER" THAT WOULD REDUCE THE COUNCIL'S EFFECTIVENESS AND FURTHER COMPLICATE ACHIEVING CONSENSUS.

3 (C) UNDERSCORING THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH ITALY VIEWS THE MATTER, ARAGONA SAID PRIME MINISTER BERLUSCONI WAS PREPARING TO WRITE THE PRESIDENT WARNING OF THE PERILS INHERENT IN UNSC REFORM.

4. (C) ARAGONA CIRCLED BACK TO THE ISSUE DURING A SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION OF ITALIAN CAPABILITIES TO TRAIN POLICE UNITS FOR PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS. ITALY HAD DECIDED TO DEVOTE PART OF A TRAINING CENTER IN TURIN INTO A TURNKEY UN PROGRAM TO DEVELOP AFRICAN POLICE UNITS CAPABLE OF PARTICIPATING EFFECTIVELY IN PEACEKEEPING OPS. "WE COULD HAVE DONE THIS ON OUR OWN, BUT DECIDED TO DO IT FOR KOFI BECAUSE IT'S OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO HIM," ARAGONA NOTED, IMPLYING THE GOI WOULD EXPECT HIM TO REMEMBER IF AND WHEN SERIOUS UNSC REFORM EFFORTS RESURFACED.

5. (C) COMMENT: FOR AT LEAST TEN YEARS, ITALY'S POSITION ON UNSC REFORM HAS BEEN THAT VIRTUALLY ANY CHANGE, OR NO CHANGE AT ALL, WOULD BE BETTER THAN GIVING GERMANY A PERMANENT SEAT, WHICH WOULD VISIBLY SEAL ITALY INTO SECOND-LEAGUE STATUS WITHIN THE EU. WE SO FAR HAVE SEEN NONE OF THE SHADOWS THAT HAVE CLEARLY SPOOKED THE MFA AND, BY INFERENCE, THE PRIME MINISTER'S STAFF. IT MAY BE THAT UN PLANS TO CREATE A PANEL OF EMINENT PERSONS TO EXAMINE UN REFORM, IN LIGHT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE THREATS, HAS BEEN ENOUGH TO PROMPT THIS SURGE OF ACTIVITY. THE ITALIANS HAVE BEEN IRRITATED BY THE NEW ANGLO-FRANCO-GERMAN 'TRILATERALISM' (REFTEL), THOUGH, AND PERHAPS HEAR AN ECHO OF BERLIN'S ASPIRATIONS FOR A PERMANENT SECURITY COUNCIL SEAT SOMEWHERE IN THE THREE LEADERS' PROMISES TO COORDINATE POSITIONS ON AN INCREASING RANGE OF ISSUES. END COMMENT.
SEMBLER

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